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Chem-Bio News

1. HOMELAND SECURITY FORECASTS 5-YEAR THREAT PICTURE: *"Earlier this month, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction remains "the highest priority at the federal level."*

2. INFECTIOUS AIR TRAVELERS WATCH LIST FLAWED BUT WORKING: *"Two of 33 persons on 'Do Not Board' list are known to have attempted to evade US air travel restriction."*

3. GOLD NANOPARTICLES FOR CONTROLLED DRUG DELIVERY: *"Using tiny gold particles and infrared light, MIT researchers have developed a drug-delivery system that allows multiple drugs to be released in a controlled fashion."*

Chem-Demil News

1. LAST VX NERVE AGENT MUNITION ELIMINATED FROM CMA'S DESTRUCTION STOCKPILE: *"The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) marked the destruction of all VX nerve agent munitions at its destruction sites on Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2008."*

CB Daily Report

Chem-Bio News

HOMELAND SECURITY FORECASTS 5-YEAR THREAT PICTURE

By Eileen Sullivan

Associated Press on Government Executive.com

December 26, 2008

"The terrorism threat to the United States over the next five years will be driven by instability in the Middle East and Africa, persistent challenges to border security and increasing Internet savvy, says a new intelligence assessment obtained by The Associated Press.

Chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear attacks are considered the most dangerous threats that could be carried out against the U.S. But those threats are also the most unlikely because it is so difficult for al-Qaida and similar groups to acquire the materials needed to carry out such plots, according to the internal Homeland Security Threat Assessment for the years 2008-2013.

The al-Qaida terrorist network continues to focus on U.S. attack targets vulnerable to massive economic losses, casualties and political "turmoil," the assessment said.

Earlier this month, Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff said the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction remains "the highest priority at the federal level."

The full article can be found at: http://govexec.com/story_page.cfm?articleid=41691&dcn=todaysnews

ANALYST NOTE: Readers may wish to refer to items #2 and 4 in the 29 December 2008 issue of the CB Daily for an additional perspective on the potential difficulty or ease of creating hazards.

[Return to Top](#)

INFECTIOUS AIR TRAVELERS WATCH LIST FLAWED BUT WORKING

By Anthony L. Kimery

HSToday

December 30, 2008

"Two of 33 persons on 'Do Not Board' list are known to have attempted to evade US air travel restriction.

It takes "10 hours ... on average" for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to place persons known or strongly believed to have a highly infectious disease like tuberculosis (TB) on the public health Do Not Board (DNB) list which is supposed to bar them from boarding commercial aircraft departing from or arriving in the United States, according to CDC documents.

Although the public health DNB list was authorized under the Aviation and Transportation Security Act of 2001, it wasn't until after concerns about infectious diseases monitoring were highlighted following the failure of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) authorities to stop two people (including a Mexican businessman from Juarez, Mexico who'd repeatedly criss-crossed the US/Mexican border in the spring of 2007) with TB exiting and entering the US for the government to finally cobble together the DNB process nearly seven years later."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.hstoday.us/content/view/6632/149/>

[Return to Top](#)

GOLD NANOPARTICLES FOR CONTROLLED DRUG DELIVERY

Physorg.com

December 30, 2008

"Using tiny gold particles and infrared light, MIT researchers have developed a drug-delivery system that allows multiple drugs to be released in a controlled fashion."

"Delivery devices already exist that can release two drugs, but the timing of the release must be built into the device — it cannot be controlled from outside the body. The new system is controlled externally and theoretically could deliver up to three or four drugs.

The new technique takes advantage of the fact that when gold nanoparticles are exposed to infrared light, they melt and release drug payloads attached to their surfaces.

Nanoparticles of different shapes respond to different infrared wavelengths, so "just by controlling the infrared wavelength, we can choose the release time" for each drug, said Andy Wijaya, graduate student in chemical engineering and lead author of the paper."

The full article can be found at: <http://www.physorg.com/news149860678.html>

[Return to Top](#)

Chem-Demil News

LAST VX NERVE AGENT MUNITION ELIMINATED FROM CMA'S DESTRUCTION STOCKPILE

US Army Chemical Materials Agency News Release
December 29, 2008

"The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) marked the destruction of all VX nerve agent munitions at its destruction sites on Wednesday, Dec. 24, 2008. This milestone occurred with the destruction of the last land mine containing VX at the Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF) in Anniston, Ala.

"I commend Anniston and all CMA destruction sites on this extraordinary achievement. By destroying the VX agent at each of CMA's destruction sites, you have made the world a much safer place," said Conrad Whyne, Director of CMA.

The ANCDF Site Project Manager, Timothy K. Garrett, declared, "We have reached a truly remarkable milestone following more than five years of deliberate, but careful operations. All nerve agent munitions—those containing GB and those containing VX—have been safely processed."

CMA personnel and contractors have destroyed the VX nerve agent munitions at six disposal sites: Anniston, Ala.; Umatilla, Ore.; Newport, Ind.; Pine Bluff, Ark.; Tooele, Utah; and Johnston Island approximately 800 miles southwest of Hawaii.

CMA continues to safely and securely store the remaining VX in the U.S. chemical weapons stockpile at the Blue Grass Chemical Activity near Richmond, Ky. A separate Department of Defense organization, the U.S. Army Element Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives, is charged with its destruction, with construction currently under way on a neutralization

facility there.

Destruction of chemical weapons is complete at Newport, Ind., Aberdeen, Md., and Johnston Island. Operations continue at Tooele, Umatilla, Anniston, and Pine Bluff, CMA's remaining destruction sites. These sites are destroying or preparing to destroy blister agent and the only remaining nerve agent for CMA's destruction mission—GA (Tabun) at Tooele. In addition to Kentucky, CMA continues to safely store chemical agent munitions at Pueblo, Colorado.

Last VX Nerve Agent Munition Eliminated from CMA's Destruction Stockpile VX is the least volatile, but most potent of all chemical warfare agents. It attacks the nervous system, causing the muscles to convulse uncontrollably. Exposure can result in loss of consciousness, convulsions, paralysis, and respiratory failure resulting in death. The nerve agent works similarly to pesticide and was originally developed in the early 1950s. The nation's entire original stockpile of approximately 4,400 tons of VX was produced at Newport Chemical Depot between 1961 and 1969. Newport's production facility was destroyed in 2006.

VX nerve agent was never used in combat by the United States.

"The elimination of this deadly chemical agent from each site's stockpile is a relief to the stockpile communities, and a sign of our commitment to other nations as we move one step closer to a safer world," said Mr. Whyne.

For more information, please go to the following link: <http://www.cma.army.mil/endofvx.aspx>

The full article can be found at: <http://www.cma.army.mil/fndocumentviewer.aspx?docid=003679774>

[Return to Top](#)

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